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Chief Executive Officer

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February 24, 2016

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To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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Supervisor Don Knabe
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From: Sachi A. Hamai
Chief Executive Officer

SACRAMENTO UPDATE

Executive Summary

This memorandum contains a report on the following:

- **Pursuit of Position on County-Sponsored Budget Proposal.** Consistent with Board-approved policy, this office has been working with a coalition of child welfare and child care stakeholders on a budget proposal that would establish a child care bridge program for foster children that will provide an emergency voucher for foster parents to access child care, support of a child care navigator, and trauma care training for the child care workforce. Therefore, unless otherwise directed by the Board, consistent with existing policy to support proposals that ensure that young children in the child welfare system, including those in foster care, have access to early care and child development programs; and to support efforts to ensure that vulnerable children and their families have access to consistent, uninterrupted subsidized early care services, **the Sacramento advocates will pursue this County-sponsored budget proposal with child welfare and child care stakeholders.**

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

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Pursuit of Position on County-Sponsored Budget Proposal

On March 17, 2015, the Board approved a motion directing this office to pursue legislation to clarify existing law to provide priority enrollment to foster children and children with parents under Child Protective Services supervision in subsidized child care development services. The legislative proposal was included in SB 94 of 2015; however, this measure was held in the Assembly Budget Committee and it did not proceed last year.

This office has continued to work with a coalition of stakeholders to develop a proposal to ensure that young children in foster care have access to child care services. Therefore, this office will pursue a County-sponsored budget proposal, with a coalition of child welfare and child care stakeholders specified below, that would establish a child care bridge program for foster children that will provide an emergency voucher for foster parents to access child care, support of a child care navigator, and trauma care training for the child care workforce.

Currently, foster care families, including relative caregivers, have difficulty accessing child care services due to State child care programs operating at full capacity. These programs have short enrollment timeframes which may not align when a child is placed into foster care. In addition, many counties, including Los Angeles, are experiencing an increasing shortage of foster parents, many who report that the lack of access to child care services is a significant barrier to caring for these children. The implementation of the Continuum of Care Reform under AB 403 (Chapter 773, Statutes of 2015) will also further increase the need for counties to recruit, retain and support more foster families.

Specifically, the budget proposal would establish a child care bridge program for foster children and would provide \$31.0 million statewide for the following components: 1) \$22.0 million to provide emergency child care vouchers, for up to six months, to foster families caring for children 0 through 3 years of age, and parenting foster youth; 2) \$4.0 million for child care navigator support for families to facilitate the immediate use of the emergency child care voucher and help transition or stabilize the child into a long-term, high-quality licensed child development setting; and 3) \$5.0 million for trauma-informed care training for child care providers to help meet the unique needs of abused and neglected young children.

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) supports the budget proposal and indicates that access to quality child care for caregivers of children in foster care is of critical importance to ensure that caregivers receive the necessary support, and vulnerable children are placed in a safe and nurturing environment in a timely manner.

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This budget proposal is supported by a coalition of stakeholders, including the County's Inter-agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect; County Welfare Directors Association; Alliance for Children's Rights; Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles; Children Now; Children's Advocacy Institute; Child Care Resource Center; First 5 LA; Advancement Project; Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce; LA Partnership; National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter; Court Appointed Special Advocates; California Alternative Payment Program Association; Association of Community Human Services Agencies; Youth Law Center; USC School of Social Work; and Southern California Grantmakers. There is no known opposition to this proposal.

This budget proposal is consistent with Board-approved policies to: 1) support proposals that ensure that young children in the child welfare system, including those in foster care, have access to early care and child development programs for which they are eligible and prioritized; and 2) support efforts to ensure that vulnerable children and their families have access to consistent, uninterrupted subsidized early care services. **Therefore, unless otherwise directed by the Board, the Sacramento advocates will pursue a County-sponsored budget proposal, with the above coalition mentioned, to establish a child care bridge program for foster children that will provide an emergency voucher for foster parents to access child care, support of a child care navigator, and trauma care training for the child care workforce.**

We will continue to keep you advised.

SAH:JJ:MR
OR:ma

c: All Department Heads
Legislative Strategist
Local 721
Coalition of County Unions
California Contract Cities Association
Independent Cities Association
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City Managers Associations
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